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A REVIEW OF THE PAST.

A SERMON,

DELIVERED AT SHEFFIELD,

On the First Sabbath in January, 1839,

WITH REFERENCE TO THE

TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY

OF THE AUTHOR'S SETTLEMENT IN THAT PLACE.

BY JAMES BRADFORD.

PASTOR OF THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.

PITTSFIELD :

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RESEARCH & ANALYSIS OF THE PROGRESS OF THE
NATIONAL DEFENSE PROGRAMS

A REVIEW OF THE PAST.

ECCLESIASTES iii. 15.

God requireth that which is past.

IF indeed, as the pious poet has well said, “’Tis greatly wise to talk with our *past hours*, and ask them what report they bore to heaven,” surely it is the part of wisdom to review our *past years*, and enquire what is *their* record concerning us in the remembrance of Him from whom we received them, and who will require them all at our hands. The past, my friends, the *past*, ah ! it is not, as too often imagined, it is not vanished and annihilated as a dream when one awaketh. With all its blessings, and privileges, and warnings, the past is in the eye of God as though it were present ; and shall return again, and be exhibited before his throne, where we shall all be assembled to meet it, answer for it, and receive according to its testimony.

The stream of life has borne us all, through various scenes, steadily and directly towards the close of time and the awards of eternity. We have just closed, not only another *year* of our short and un-

certain pilgrimage on earth, but have also recently come to the close of *twenty-five years* since the connexion between this church and people and their present minister was consummated ;* and is it not well to grasp a few fleeting moments, and elevate them to a serious review of the past, to an examination of the report which this considerable portion of our short life has faithfully and impartially borne to heaven ? “ *God requireth that which is past :*” were it not so, then the past might be buried in oblivion, and no essential injury accrue to us. But *God, from whom* we have received existence, and every blessing, and *to whom* we are accountable, “ *God requires the past ;*” and our interests for eternity are inevitably involved in our regard to it. With deep attention, then, let us now

I. Review the past.

God, the infinite Spirit, orders and controls the affairs of men according to the dictates of his unfathomable wisdom and holiness. In our review, therefore, we are not to lay an undue stress upon our own wisdom and exertions, nor attribute to our friends and enemies the good and evil of which they have been only instrumental. Nor has *fortune*, or *chance*, or *accident* any thing to do in our concerns : but these, so far as they have any meaning, are only names for the *indefinable operations*

* October 13th, 1813. The want of health prevented the preparation and delivery of this Discourse in October, 1833.

of Divine Providence. It is true indeed that "A man's heart deviseth his way, but *the Lord* directeth his steps." "Every good gift, and every perfect gift is *from above*, and cometh down from *the Father of lights.*"

God *made* us, and not we ourselves : and he made us *rational*, thus elevating us above all his other creatures on earth ; and *immortal*, destining us to a more exalted existence in another world, capable of knowing, serving, and enjoying him forever

The time of our birth, when means of instruction, and for the attainment of useful knowledge, were so abundant in the world, is worthy of special notice : and *the place* of our birth too, in this land of civil liberty, and literary light, with all the facilities for the improvement of the mind, and preparation for usefulness and enjoyment, that we could reasonably desire

Our *preservation*, during the feeble and helpless state of infancy, in which so many tender buds are blighted, and which so many myriads never survive, is a distinguishing favor from Him in whom "we all live, and move, and have our being." In the season of giddy childhood, and heedless youth, and all the way onward to the present time, has God preserved and sustained us ; rescuing us from unseen dangers ; delivering us from exposures ; shielding us from diseases, and recovering us from their fatal influence ; continuing to us our reason ; supplying us with genuine and steadfast friends ; and from day to day, and from year to year, providing

for our returning wants, with more than a parent's assiduity, liberality, kindness and care.

If we consider in what a *dying world* we live, we shall be amazed at the distinguishing goodness of God in sparing us, while so many have been removed, on every side of us.

" Death rides on every passing breeze,
 " And lurks in every flower ;
 " Each season has its own disease,
 " Its peril every hour"—

and still we live.

Among ourselves death has not ceased his work a single year since we were born, and but seldom a single month. Here the tyrant has triumphed over the aged and the young, the prosperous and the adverse, the virtuous and the vicious, laying his victims promiscuously in the dust. Oh ! what numerous monuments rise over the cold bosoms that once beat high with affection for us ; over those who shared our friendship, our counsels, our pursuits, our sorrows, and our joys !

During the last year only, *thirty-nine* of our kindred and acquaintance here have been numbered with the dead : and during the *twenty-five years past, seven hundred and fifteen*, out of a population of *about two thousand and five hundred*, have passed away into the unseen world. There is not a neighborhood, nor but a very few families, in this place, in which I have not been called to officiate on funeral occasions : in many neighborhoods I have been very often, and often in the same families. Of these seven hundred and fifteen, *eighty-*

It is a common error to suppose that the
theology of the Church is a mere collection of
dogmas, and that the only way to know
the truth is to accept these dogmas without
question. But the Church is a living organism,
and its life is found in the love of God and
of our fellow-men.

The Church is not a mere organization,
but a community of people who are united
by a common faith and a common love.

It is the duty of every Christian to
live in the love of God and of his fellow-men,
and to be faithful to the teachings of the Church.
The Church is the body of Christ, and we are
its members. We are called to live in the
love of God and of our fellow-men, and to
be faithful to the teachings of the Church.
The Church is the body of Christ, and we are
its members. We are called to live in the
love of God and of our fellow-men, and to
be faithful to the teachings of the Church.

Through the Church, we are united to Christ,
and through Christ, we are united to God.
The Church is the body of Christ, and we are
its members. We are called to live in the
love of God and of our fellow-men, and to
be faithful to the teachings of the Church.
The Church is the body of Christ, and we are
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nine were persons of color : three hundred and sixty-six were males, and three hundred and forty-nine were females, Under one year of age were eighty-four ; between one and ten were one hundred and thirty-five ; between ten and twenty were fifty-one ; between twenty and thirty were sixty-five ; between thirty and forty were sixty ; between forty and fifty were forty-seven ; between fifty and sixty were forty-eight ; between sixty and seventy were seventy-nine ; between seventy and eighty were eighty-two ; between eighty and ninety were fifty ; between ninety and one hundred were twelve ; and over one hundred were two. The average number of deaths annually is a little more than twenty-eight. The greatest number that have died in any one year, for twenty-five years past, is fifty-six ; which was in 1814, the first year of my min-*

* One of these was a female of color, respecting whom little is known. The other was Mrs Sarah Smith, the widow of Deacon Ebenezer Smith. She was born in Boston, Mass. She died the 6th of January, 1822, at the advanced age of *one hundred and two years and four months*. She settled here under the ministry of the Rev. Mr. Hubbard, the first Pastor of this Church, and lived *eight years after the settlement of the present Pastor* ; during which time she frequently attended public ordinances at the Sanctuary. She was a professor of religion more than *seventy years* ; and to those who were best acquainted with her daily walk and conversation, she appeared a devoted christian, " *shining brighter and brighter to the perfect day.*" On the expiration of an hundred years from her birth, which was on the 18th of September, 1819, the Pastor preached an appropriate Sermon at her residence, at which time she appeared a remarkable instance, not only of mental vigor, but of genuine devotedness to God ; ardently desiring, but calmly waiting, for a glorious entrance into rest ; expecting it only through the infinite atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ. On this interesting occasion many were ready to say of this aged and eminent christian—

" Thee we congratulate : content,
 " Should propitious heaven design,
 " Life for us as wisely spent,
 " Though but *half* the length of thine."

istry. In that year a fatal epidemic prevailed in this town and vicinity. Many were hurried away by death in a very unusual manner: numbers from the same neighborhood, and two or three from the same family in rapid succession. Great alarm and solicitude at this time pervaded the public mind; and in view of this desolating judgment, on the 23d of March, in accordance with a previous vote of the Church, they assembled in the house of God, with their families and many of the people, and spent the day in humiliation and prayer: and, account for it as we may, it is a fact, that *from that time*, the plague was stayed, and the voice of health again generally heard in our habitations. *The least number of deaths* in any one year was SIXTEEN, and that in the year 1816. *The longest season in which*, during the last twenty-five years, *there has been no instance of mortality among us*, is *three months and fourteen days*, viz from the 28th of May to the 11th of September, 1824.

Within the twenty five years past *ninety-one* members of the Church, including three Deacons,* have here finished their earthly pilgrimage. As nearly as can be ascertained, of the *eighty-five* belonging to this Church at the time of my settlement, but *twenty-five* yet remain alive, and but *eleven* are now living among us, and *seven* only of these, including two Deacons, are able to be abroad

* Aaron Foot, who died in 1822; Jonathan Hubbard, son of the first Pastor, who died in 1825; and Hosmer Kellogg, who died in 1836.

and meet us in our assemblies ; and *all* of these eleven are close on the verge of the grave. Of the seven hundred and fifteen deaths, about *thirty* have transpired under circumstances peculiarly afflict-
ing. *Three* have died instantly ; *six* have been suddenly killed ; *four* have died in consequence of clothes taking fire ; *three* by being scalded ; *five* have been drowned ; *two* were found dead in the field ; *three* were found dead in their bed ; *one* was killed by the hand of another ; and *three*, deprived of the regular exercise of their reason, were removed by their own act.

Another thing, peculiarly interesting, and admonitory to myself, at least, I would not pass unnoticed. On the council for my ordination, there were *twelve* pastors of Churches, all but one of this County.* *Four* only of these twelve are yet living ; and but *two*† sustain the places they had at the time of my settlement.

Now amidst so many instances of mortality, and so many of different ages and conditions, how wonderful is it that *we* have not been of the number ! Who but God has made *us* to differ from those who have gone before us to their final account ?

But our review of the past must not be limited to the consideration of *creating* and *preserving* goodness ; it should extend also especially to the

* Dr Stephen West, Moses Bradford of New Hampshire, Jacob Catlin, Alvan Hyde, Samuel Shepard, Levi White, Ebenezer Jennings, Elijah Wheeler, Joseph L. Mills, Thomas Panderson, Joseph W. Dow, Sylvester Burt.

† Dr. Shepard, of Lenox, who has been settled there *forty-three* years, last April ; and Mr. Mills, of Becket, who was ordained *thirty-two* years ago, last June.

contemplation of those blessings which flow only through the instrumentality of the Gospel, and Gospel institutions.

The first settlers of this town, which was purchased of the natives in 1724, and incorporated in 1733, were descendants of the pilgrim fathers, and possessed of their spirit; and they made it their grand object to provide for the public worship of God, and the stated preaching of his word. At their first town meeting, holden on the 16th of January, 1733, they voted to erect a meeting-house and employ a preacher: a preacher was immediately and constantly employed, and the meeting-house was built in 1735. In the same year, one hundred and three years ago the 22d of October last, a Church was first organized here, with Daniel Kellogg and Philip Callendar its deacons;* and at the same time Mr. Jonathan Hubbard was consecrated as the first pastor. by an ecclesiastical council of ministers and delegates from the then neighboring churches, viz. from Litchfield and Enfield in Connecticut, and from Springfield, Northampton and Sunderland in Massachusetts.† The

* The wife of Deac. Kellogg was the daughter of Obadiah Noble, of Westfield, the first white man who came to reside in Sheffield. He spent the first winter of his residence here with no other associates than the Indians. In the spring he went back to Westfield; and in June he returned, bringing with him this daughter, who was the first white woman that came into the town. She travelled from Westfield, more than 40 miles, when about 16 years of age, on horseback, bringing a bed with her; and spent one night in the wilderness, in what is now the east part of Tyringham.

† Timothy Cobens of Litchfield, Peter Reynolds of Enfield, Samuel Hopkins of Springfield, Jonathan Edwards of Northampton, and William Rand of Sunderland, were the Pastors on this Council.

sentiments embraced by the church, and inculcated by their spiritual teachers, at the first settlement of the town, were strictly *evangelical* : virtually such as have been for many years, and are now, embodied in our confession of faith. After about *twenty-nine years* from his settlement, the Rev. Mr. Hubbard, having been dismissed from his pastoral connexion but a few months, was numbered with the dead, viz. on the 6th of July, 1765. Before his decease, for the better accommodation of the people, a new meeting-house was erected, larger, more commodious, and more central than the first, near the spot on which *this* house now stands. Although the church and people were destitute of a settled minister about seven years next succeeding Mr. Hubbard's decease, yet they were not without the regular administration of the word and ordinances. On the 10th of June, 1772, Mr. John Keep was ordained pastor of this church ; but his ministry was continued only about *twelve* years, he being removed by death September 3d, 1785, in the 36th year of his age. Still religious institutions were sustained ; and in May, 1791, the Rev. Ephraim Judson was installed as the *third* minister : he died on the 23d of February, 1813, in the 77th year of his age, and the 23d of his ministry. The next week after Mr. Judson's burial, the present pastor of the church, by the very mysterious operations of Divine Providence, was led to this place to preach ; and was ordained on the 13th of October, 1813 ; and, " having ob-

tained help of God, he continues to this day."

Prompted, it is believed, by an increasing regard to religious institutions, the people, in the year 1819, at the expense of more than *four thousand* dollars, removed, enlarged, and extensively repaired this house; beautifying it, and rendering it much more convenient than before, by the addition of a steeple and bell.*

In reviewing the past, we perceive that *not one minister settled here, for the space of more than one hundred years, has been sent away from this people, or felt himself necessitated to leave them.* The first minister indeed, being advanced in years, was disconnected from his pastoral relation a few months previous to his decease; but he found no occasion to leave the place: and his remains lie here, among those of your fathers, kindred and friends; and so do those of the *second* minister; and so do those of the *third*: they have *all* lived, and labored and *died here*; and the present minister has been continued till *his* eyes begin to grow dim, and *his* head is evidently blossoming for the tomb. Whether this very *singular fact* testifies any thing in favor of the ministers or not, sure I am its testimony is much in favor of the church and people here. It affords evidence most clear and undeniable, that they have not been disputatious, and contentious, and given to change; but

* The people here transacted their ecclesiastical concerns, *as a town*, till 1825; since that time, as a matter of convenience, they have transacted them *as a Society*.

that, on the contrary, they have been quiet, forbearing, and stable : and it is believed that this has now become *a habit* so well fixed, that *the next minister* here, and it may be, all succeeding ministers, will also have it to say, that no pastor of the church in Sheffield was sent elsewhere to spend his last days, and find his grave.

Nor should it be overlooked, that, though the church has been instituted here more *than one hundred years*, and the population for *forty years past*, at least, has been *over two thousand*, spread over a territory about *eight miles long and six broad*, and many have been subjected to considerable inconvenience in attending public worship at the centre, yet no circumstances, in the estimation of the church and people, have made it necessary, or expedient. to *divide, erect a separate place of worship, and support an additional teacher*. Whatever, at any time, may have been the wishes or designs of *some*, in years gone by, or whatever incipient measures have been taken, relative to a division, all have been so overruled, in the good providence of God, that it has never been effected.— This is another *remarkable fact* in the ecclesiastical history of this church and people, hardly an instance like it existing in all New-England, if in all the land : on the contrary, most towns of the dimensions and population of this, having *two*, and some *three*, and others *four* separate places of worship ; and yet, in many of them, not *one* vigorous, flourishing society.

Look now at the *salutary influence of religious institutions* continued here so uninterruptedly for more than a century. Contemplate this influence only in relation to *present enjoyment* in general. Survey a moment the state of things, with reference to this particular, in those portions of the world where these institutions are not possessed. Look upon Asia, with its hundreds of millions of inhabitants ; upon the interior of Africa ; upon the wilds of North and South-America ; and upon many of the islands of the seas, all of which are filled, not with Gospel institutions, but with a stupid and debasing *idolatry*. And look on Turkey, and Palestine, and Persia, and Egypt, and Arabia, and a portion of Africa, under the iron reign of *Mohammedan imposture*. And look upon Spain, and Portugal, and France, and Italy, a portion of Germany, South-America, and many other portions of the world, where *the delusion of Popery* prevails ; a delusion almost as deep and degrading as that which reigns over the regions of Mahometanism, or of heathenism even. Or look at New-Orleans in Louisiana, or Vicksburgh in Mississippi, or any other place where the religion of the Bible is generally contemned, and its institutions are disregarded.* In all such places ignorance and vice, and *wretchedness* their unfailing associate, reign, in an awful measure unchecked and unrebuked. The

* "Waiter, bring my baggage," said a guest at an Inn in New-Orleans. "Where, and *what* is your baggage, sir?" "It is under my pillow ; *three pistols, a pack of cards, a bowie knife, and one shirt.*"

laws even, where laws exist, are unavailing : for it is a truth, that the influence of human laws, with all their sanctions and penalties, *without religion*, cannot effectually restrain men : observation and experience in all ages and places bear testimony to this. And now, what *true* enjoyment, think ye, enjoyment suitable for a *rational* being, is to be had where such a state of things prevails ? And why do *we* differ, as most unquestionably we do, relative to *our enjoyments*, from these portions of our world and of our own country even, unless it be through the salutary influence of religious institutions ? By this influence the mind is enlightened, the unhallowed passions are restrained, and reason and conscience are permitted to sway the conduct of men one towards another : and, while it turns them from the unrestrained indulgence of their corrupt propensities, it prompts them to self-respect, to industry and sobriety, to kindness and good-will towards each other, and thus, in modes innumerable, greatly promotes and perpetuates their enjoyments.

This too promotes *prosperity in the common pursuits of life*. Ordinarily a people who sustain religious institutions *thrive faster*, on the whole, accumulate more of this world's goods, other things being equal, notwithstanding all the expense of supporting them, than those who have no such institutions. Where their influence is *not* felt, it costs more, tenfold more, to support the crimes and their consequences that prevail, than it would

to support the Gospel. My hearers, be assured that a people cannot *afford*, in a *pecuniary point of view*, they cannot afford to do without religious institutions. I know that some, in all the towns of New-England, some among ourselves, consider it burdensome to share in the expense of supporting them ; and some too who are accurate calculators : but have they ever calculated how much *more* burdensome it would be to support the extravagancies, the follies, and the vices, which, without the influence of these institutions, would increase and prevail, and inevitably lay upon them a tax almost intolerable ? If any doubt the position I here assume, let them dispose of their estates and remove to a place where there is no meeting-house, no minister, no Sabbath, no Sabbath School, no religious means whatever ; and let them remain there *five* years, or *one* year only, and then return, and say honestly, that it is *cheaper* and *better* to do *without* Gospel institutions, and I will acknowledge that I may be in an error. My hearers, destroy this pleasant house to-morrow ; and to-morrow tell your minister you have no further need of his services ; and dispense with the annual payment of *seven hundred dollars* for the support of Gospel institutions ; and inform your children and the rising generation about you, that the first day of every week is a holiday, and, employ it as they will, they need fear no more the frown of God or man. How long, think ye, before you would need a house *larger* than this, to accommodate the throng of wretched paupers

and their families, made so by their crimes ; and a sum quadruple to that now paid for Gospel institutions for their support? How long before, by the increase of idleness, intemperance, gambling, licentiousness, and general dissipation and crime, and the decreased value of your farms, you would know and feel, to your sorrow, that you had made a foolish bargain? How long before every *pious* person, yea, and every *sober, industrious citizen*, would feel he could not live in the place, and hasten out of it? And how long before another pious, or even *decent*, individual would come in to take up his abode with you, though he could have *given* him the very best estate among you? It cannot be disputed, by any who will view the subject in its true light, that the influence of the Gospel is favorable to the temporal prosperity of men : that it *has been*, and is so, to *you*, my hearers, as a community, you cannot doubt.

And is not the same true in relation to *morals*? “Morals! morals!” I seem to hear some exclaim, “where are the morals of a people more corrupt, “than among ourselves, notwithstanding the influence of religious institutions?” In many places, I reply; though it must be conceded they are lamentably corrupt here. Profanity, licentiousness, intemperance, Sabbath breaking, gambling, and their kindred iniquities, exist here, yes, *here* among ourselves!! What then? Is it therefore true that the influence of Gospel institutions is inefficacious on the morals of men? All this immorality exists

here, in despite of these institutions ; and if it *exist* now, under the restraints of Gospel truth, O, how would it flourish, and thrive, and grow rank, and become past endurance, were these restraints all removed !! Now it is confined to, *comparatively*, a *few* ; and, *comparatively*, done in the dark, and in corners ; *then* it would be practised by the *most*, and stalk forth unblushingly into open day, and forcibly obtrude itself upon the observation of every passing stranger, and *none* would escape its destructive influence.

Unless I very greatly err, there has been, on the whole, an increased regard to religious institutions here, within the twenty-five years past ; and I think it will be conceded, by every accurate and candid observer, that the morals of the people, however corrupt they may be now, have generally improved, and that too in no trifling measure.

As these institutions have been continued and prospered, so the number of professedly pious persons has increased : and, notwithstanding all the defections in the church, and there will be defections while man is depraved and fallible, by which *morals* even, as well as religion, are outraged and trampled upon ; still, a church, in proportion to its sound and faithful members, is always exercising a healthful influence in community—an influence clearly perceptible upon the morals of the people. The *direct* influence put forth by this church in favor of morals, by the *distribution of tracts*, and by their *early recommendation of the*

temperance pledge, which has been, and is felt by many individuals and families among us; and that connected *with Sabbath Schools*, continued from year to year, for many years past, bearing upon the feelings and conduct of such numbers of the rising generation, is an influence which by no means ought to be overlooked. Indeed the church, *without any other organization than it has already*, being obligated by bonds which cannot be made stronger, will, as the members are faithful, set their faces against *all* immorality, of every name and every form.

Most undeniable then is it, that religious institutions are above all price as it regards the *temporal good* of individuals and communities : and a Secretary of the Home Missionary Society, writing while on a tour among the new settlements at the West, strikingly substantiates the fact, that discriminating and judicious men *of the world* feel and acknowledge it. He says :

" Even the never-failing theme of "*the currency*" is scarcely more frequent " in men's mouths, in the circles where I have moved, than the question, "*Where can we get a good minister ?*" This "*is not the result,*" he adds, "*of purely a religious feeling ; even worldly men, who have any regard to the* "*authority of law, and the decencies of society,* are convinced that an evangelical, permanent ministry, *is essential to the life that now is, as well as that* "*which is to come.*"

But the salutary influence of religious institutions, *relative to spiritual interests*, especially demands our notice. The doctrines and precepts of the Gospel have been unceasingly dispensed to the dying and accountable population here, from the beginning. During the twenty-five years past the

church and people have had *thirteen hundred* Sabbaths : and on those and other occasions, within the same period, the pastor has delivered among them about *two thousand and five hundred* written Discourses, including between *three and four hundred* on funeral occasions, besides many *unwritten*. Numbers also have been preached by others, particularly during the absence and illness of the pastor, in times of special revival, and on many other occasions ; so that not less than *three thousand* Gospel sermons have been delivered here within the quarter of a century past : nor have they been, through the agency of the Divine Spirit, without saving effect upon the hearts and lives of many. Besides those who have been essentially benefitted, that were not numbered with the visible church here, many have been led to acknowledge openly, in a public profession, their attachment to the religion of Christ. Of the number that constituted the church at the time of its organization, and the additions made to it previous to Mr. Judson's ministry, there are no records : during his ministry *sixty* were added. At the time of my settlement there were in this church *eighty-five* members.— During the twenty-five years past *four hundred and thirty-six* have been added ; *three hundred and fifty-four* by profession, the others by letter : and *five hundred and thirty-one* have been baptised ; *one hundred and seventy-two* adults and *three hundred and fifty-nine* children. After deducting *ninety-one* removed by death, *seven* by excommu-

nication, and *one hundred and eighty-two* by dismission to other churches, there yet remain *two hundred and forty-one*, nearly *three times* the number belonging to the church in 1813.*

The years 1814, '15 and '16 were remarkable for the interest felt among the people here relative to the salvation of the soul. During that period there were added to the church *ninety-seven* members ; in 1814 *twenty* ; in 1815 *twenty-one* ; in 1816 *fifty-six*. Another like season commenced in 1821, while the pastor was delivering a connected series of *doctrinal* discourses, and extended into 1823 ; during which *one hundred and fifty-eight*, *sixty* of whom were heads of families, were admitted ; *ninety-nine* of them on the *same day*, viz. MAY 22d, 1822 ; *fifty-six* of whom took upon them the seal of the covenant in the ordinance of baptism. Another like season occurred in 1827, the fruits of which were *thirty-five* added to the church. Again in 1831 the Spirit of the Most High visited us, and *forty-nine* were added : in 1836 *twelve*, and *fifteen* in 1838.†

* Of this number *thirty are absent* and *twenty-five are confined*, or prevented from attending public ordinances, by the infirmities of age and disease

† The revival of 1821 '22 and '23 was preceded, or rather commenced, by the admission of two men, living in different parts of the town, one of them aged *eighty-five* and the other *seventy-six*. The *youngest* individual admitted was thirteen years old. No specially *new* means, or measures, were employed for the production of these peculiar seasons. The church was first aroused, and humbled, and quickened to prayer and effort, under the ordinary administration of the truth. Then indeed they resorted to seasons of fasting and prayer, and religious conference, and greater fidelity towards the thoughtless ; and in proportion to their humility and activity in duty the work progressed among the people. Neighboring pastors indeed have been invited to come in and la-

How many of the whole number admitted to the church in these seasons, were really new creatures in Christ Jesus, the judgment day will tell ; but that the institutions of the Gospel, through the almighty energies of the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, have been instrumental here of the renewal of *many* hearts, and the sanctification of *many* lives, not the bitterest enemy of our holy religion among us will soberly deny. If they have not produced all that has been *claimed*, all that has been *professed* even, yet they have produced *much* ; that even which, in many instances, will be found in the end more valuable than empires, more valuable than worlds.

Look also at the salutary influence of Gospel institutions here for twenty-five years past, *through the instrumentality of those who have felt their power*. Nearly *two hundred* individuals who have gone out from us are scattered abroad in *eight* different States ; and, in proportion as they are faithful to their covenant vows, and actuated by the spirit of their Divine Master, they are giving their influence to the cause of virtue and piety among their fellow-men. Of these, *eight*, from a neighboring town, where the Congregational Church had become utterly extinct, and where the pastor of *this*

bor ; and there has been *one*, and but one, *protracted meeting*, and that but of four days, among us, which was in 1831 ; but that was not had till the spirit of the Lord was evidently moving on the hearts of numbers, especially among the members of the *Bible Class*, then consisting of *one hundred and sixty* of which about *forty* expressed a hope of renewing grace.

church frequently labored, who first united with us, we dismissed together, to be organized with others into a church there. Two of these* have been, for many years, *deacons* of that church, now consisting of more than *sixty* members, and *their* influence in the cause of truth and holiness has already been felt by many, and, it is believed, *will be* felt by more in future generations. Through their example and efforts, and that of others, and especially of devoted pastors, the church continues, a light and a blessing to many around them. God grant it may never be without faithful ministers and members, by whose prayers and labors a life-giving influence may go forth to every generation, down to the end of time.

Five individuals who first stood as professors of religion in this church,† within the twenty-five years past, have become preachers of those doctrines they here professed : and one other,‡ eminently promising, has been prevented from entering on the same work only by the arrest of death, while but just in the bloom and vigor of his days.

Prompted by the influence of the Gospel, the church has paid, within twenty-five years past, out of *the Church Treasury*, exclusive of the expense

* Andrew Bacon and Stephen Carver, of Egremont. The venerable Aaron Kinne was pre-eminently instrumental in the re-establishment of Gospel institutions in Egremont.

† Chester Dewey, formerly a professor in Williams College ; Loring D. Dewey ; Cyrus Byington, now missionary among the Choctaws ; Norman Kellogg, now in Michigan ; and E. W. Kellogg, at Auburn.

‡ Comfort Sparks, a graduate at Williams, and a beneficiary of the American Education Society.

of their communion seasons, for their poor, for the aid of pious young men preparing for the ministry, for Sabbath school books and other publications for the promotion of truth and holiness, and for the supply of the desk during the pastor's illness and absence, about *four hundred dollars* : and, in connexion with the people, since the year 1825, in addition to what they had previously done for the same or similar objects, to aid the designs of the American Bible, and Foreign Missionary Societies, about *three thousand dollars*, and much for the objects of the Education, Home Missionary, Tract, Seaman's Friend, Colonization, and Sabbath School Societies ; and something for many other objects of benevolence. For the last three years, the contributions in the congregation for the various objects have been about *thirteen hundred dollars*, averaging over *four hundred* a year.

In connexion with these efforts of a pecuniary nature, prayers for the prosperity of Zion have here ascended ; particularly in *the monthly concert*, commenced in accordance with a vote of the church, September 1st, 1815, and held at the commencement of each month to the present time, and at the annual season of prayer for the seminaries of learning, besides other ordinary and extraordinary seasons.*

Some years since the church pledged itself, by

* Thursday evening of each week has been observed as a season of prayer, especially for *Divine influences* upon this church and people, for more than 30 years.

a formal vote, to sustain the Sabbath School in this congregation, which it has since done from year to year, and which, in some of the last seasons, has contained between *two and three hundred* scholars ; under six male, including the pastor, and six female superintendants, with a librarian and secretary, and *between thirty and forty* teachers. Connected with it is a library, replenished from time to time by the united contributions of the church and congregation, consisting of from seven to nine hundred books. A Bible class has also been sustained by the pastor of the church, during the winter season, at the intermission of the public exercises, for *nine years*, consisting of from *one hundred and fifty to two hundred* individuals, of all ages, over ten years.

Such, in the review, is the past : and now, “*God requireth that which is past.*” Consider then,

II. What becomes us in view of God’s past dealings with us ?

Surely we must feel that there is an imperious demand upon us for *gratitude*.

If we consider only the *creating* and *preserving* goodness of God towards us, out of what rock must that heart be formed which does not melt with grateful emotions towards our beautiful and unwearied Benefactor !

But how much greater occasion for gratitude have we that our lot has fallen where *the only remedy* for the ignorance and misery of man, the glorious Gospel, with its wise institutions and happy

influences, has been had from the first settlement of the place : where one generation after another has felt its power, in restraining the unhallowed passions of men, in checking vice and prompting to virtue, and in making men, comparatively, sober, industrious, forbearing, and affectionate ; and thus securing an exalted measure of temporal prosperity and rational enjoyment. Is there not a call upon us too for unfeigned thanksgiving to God, that this church and people have been so little given to change *relative to their religious teachers* ; thus avoiding contention, unnecessary expense, and evils innumerable ?—and that they have been blessed with such a degree of *peace and union* as to continue to this day in *one society* ? Look at places where it has not been thus. What heart-risings, what feuds, what protracted and expensive litigations even, have often arisen in connexion and in consequence !—and how difficult, in many instances, for either of the divisions to support the regular administration of the Gospel !—*Union*, my friends, *union* is strength ; and other things being equal, it is full of blessings. Not indeed that union is to be secured at the sacrifice of truth and duty : for there may be, there *are*, circumstances, in which it is not only expedient, but obligatory, on a church and people to divide ; but it is unwise, because exceedingly injurious, only for some comparatively trifling reasons, to do this : and this church and people have great occasion for gratitude that circumstances have never been per-

mitted here to arise which rendered it necessary for *them* to divide into separate societies.

But God has not *only* given and continued uninterruptedly the means of grace here, but has accompanied these means with the efficacious influences of his Spirit. For these influences, christian friends, you sighed, you prayed, you *importuned* and *agonized* in prayer, with many bitterer cries and tears. And when the blessing seemed to delay, putting yourselves in the dust deeper, and still deeper, you *persevered* in prayer ; and eventually it went up to the throne of the eternal God, and he came by the energies of his Spirit, comforting and encouraging his people, bowing the hearts of sinners, and bringing great companies of old and young to subscribe with their hands to the Lord. Oh ! what scenes were these ! And *can* we review them, and not have our hearts fill, and expand, and overflow, with gratitude ? Especially those, who, in these seasons, or in *any* season [for the time of the conversion of *one* soul is a season of the Spirit's work] were made subjects of renewing grace, are under peculiar obligations. And how do *such* view the past ? Oh ! think in what state God found you ! “ Look unto the rock whence ye were hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye were digged ; ” and contemplate that matchless grace which opened your eyes upon your guilt and ruin, and led you to submit at the feet of Jesus. What has the past been to you, but a season of the richest blessings ? a season of awakening from your long sleep of

death ; of redemption from the reigning power of sin in your soul ; of deliverance from the curse of God's violated law and from endless perdition : a season in which a sense of pardon, peace and joy sprung up in your soul ; and hope, through the merits of a redeeming God, shed light and glory on your future path, and afforded you blessed anticipations of *eternal* felicity in heaven ? Now, " God requires that which is past ;" and *can* you forget your obligations, or fail to exert all your powers to live up to them ?

If we think also of *the good of others*, and recal the numbers who have gone out from us, not only as preachers of the Gospel, but likewise as private christians, and their salutary influence upon their fellow-men : if we consider the sums contributed to do good both at home and abroad, especially to give the word of God and the messages of salvation to the destitute and to the heathen, and scatter light, and truth, and holiness throughout the land and the world : and contemplate the hundreds of youth and children instructed in the Bible Class and Sabbath School : and, in short, survey all the blessed means and influences, which have been experienced by us, and *through us, by others* ; when we recal, and duly consider, these things, I say, well may we call upon our souls, and all that is within us, to bless and praise the Lord. For truly living for *these* ends, we live to *some* good purpose ;—for our own good, the good of others, and, above all, for the glory of the Triune God.

On a review of the past there is a call upon us, not for gratitude only, but also for *humiliation*.

In view of the mercies, and privileges, and opportunities, vouchsafed us, the very *best* even, those who have made the most improvement, may well take to themselves shame and confusion of face before God. What progress, christian friends, with all our means and privileges, ought to have been made ere this, in personal holiness, benefitting the community, and glorifying God, beyond any thing that has been so much as attempted! Is not obligation augmented in proportion to privileges and opportunities communicated? Oh! what occasion then is there for deep and undissembled humiliation before God, that we have lived so much *for ourselves*; that we have been no more abundant in prayer and efforts for our own good and the good of others; that the church and the world are no more benefitted by our being in them; that the honor of God, our Benefactor, and of Christ, who died to redeem us, has been no nearer our heart; and that, going as we soon are, into the presence of our Judge, we can give no better account of our stewardship!

But have any employed *all* the bounties of God's providence to their own gratification, and entirely misimproved the price put into their hands to obtain divine wisdom. surely the review to such ought to be most humiliating and heart breaking. My dear hearers, "God requires that which is past;" the past mercies abused; the past means misim-

proved ; the past seasons lost ; the past instructions unheeded ; the past warnings disregarded ; the past strivings of the spirit resisted ; the past opportunities of doing good to yourselves, your families and fellow creatures neglected ; the past obligations to honor God, and to glorify Christ, who shed his blood for your redemption, slighted. Oh ! think again, I entreat you think again !— Within the twenty-five years past only, *thirteen hundred Sabbaths*, with all their opportunities for good, have gone before to testify against you ; and *three thousand Gospel sermons* are recorded in the book of God's remembrance to be accounted for in the final day ; and *seven hundred calls from the coffins and the graves* of departed relatives and acquaintance, with opportunities innumerable, in which you *might*, in which you *ought* to, have done good, by your example, your property, and your prayers, are registered against you ; and in addition, all the common mercies of God's providence, and the sins of your whole life. And now I ask, with the sincerest desire for your best, your eternal good, *how you expect to meet all this ?* Meet it you must : and have you not, in the review, occasion for the deepest remorse, and the most profound humiliation before God ?

On a review of the past there is, moreover, ground for *encouragement*.

As God has kindly preserved us, and provided for us *hitherto*, so we may well confide in his good providence *for time to come*. As to the precious

influence of religious institutions, may we not still expect its continuance ? True indeed there have been times here in former years, and within twenty-five years past, when dark and portentous clouds hovered over us, and lowering tempests threatened us ; but God interposed and scattered them : and still—

“ *The Lord* can clear the darkest skies,
 “ Can give us day for night ;
 “ Make *drops* of sacred sorrow rise,
 “ To *rivers* of delight.”

One hundred and three years, notwithstanding all the imperfections, errors and sins of his people ; and all the apathy, neglect and hostility of the irreligious ; and all the defects, inefficiency and interruptions in the ministry ; and all the changes in location and the ravages of death among the members of the church and of community ;—one hundred and three years, even from the first settlement of the place, has God sustained his cause here. Many a time indeed has the bush been in flames, but has never been consumed ; many a time has the bark been tossed on the tempestuous waves, but has always safely out-rode the storm ; many a time has the spark been in the ocean, but has always been kept alive : and shall we now, or at any future time of darkness and doubt, distrust God, and hang our harps on the willows in *despair* ? Assuredly not. Kind parents may indeed forget, “ yet I will not forget *thee*,” says Zion’s King : “ behold I have graven thee upon the palms

“ of my hands ; thy walls are continually before
 “ me ; thy children shall not make haste : thou
 “ shalt be called, *sought out, a city not forsaken.*”
 Only let the friends of Christ, and of religious institutions, be faithful, ever remembering that *God works by means*, and they may confidently rely on the Lord in the darkest times, assured that his cause shall be sustained, and his institutions be here continued, and their salutary influence be felt, onward, from generation to generation, even to the latest and the last.

Nor is there any ground of despondency to those even who have misimproved their means of good, unless indeed they are resolved to continue their present course unchanged till death. From *past* forbearance and long-suffering in God, you may yet have hope respecting *the future*, if you will but arise and act. “ As I live, saith the Lord, I
 “ have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but
 “ that the wicked turn from his evil way and live.”
 You have then, my dear hearers, still a space for turning to God, with repentance, faith and new obedience ; but it is the *only* space you can have. Oh ! lose not this, lest you each be constrained in the end to adopt, with unutterable anguish, the sad lamentation, “ The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and I am not saved.”

Such is the past ; and such the gratitude, the humiliation, and the encouragement demanded of us in view of it. Permit now a few

REMARKS.

I. *To the Church.*

God has placed you, christian friends, in a station of great responsibility. Much, very much, depends on *you*, under God, for the continuance of Gospel institutions here, not for twenty-five, or one hundred years to come, only, but during future generations down to the end of time. Then look well both to your *faith* and your *practice*.—*Adhere to the doctrines you profess to believe*, as expressed in your confession of faith, without wavering ; for they are, most manifestly, the very truths of God.

Cultivate a spirit of love one towards another, and harmony among yourselves. A remarkable degree of kind feeling, peace, and concord, has hitherto prevailed in this church, at least for the twenty-five years past ; and it is of the utmost importance to preserve it. Then be not distant and cold in your intercourse with each other, nor seek out and magnify one another's faults : and especially let not a part of the church adopt *new and doubtful experiments for doing good even*, in opposition to the opinion of the other part, and particularly of the *older and more experienced members*. This is a fruitful source of mischief at the present day in various portions of our land ; and has done more to divide and break up churches, to distract and dismiss ministers, and dissipate and destroy the good influence of religious institu-

tions, than almost every thing besides. Even when the object to be attained is acknowledged by *all* to be, *in itself, good and vastly important*, yet *the mode of securing it* may be very objectionable. And if it be so *really*, or not, yet if it be so *in the opinion of a considerable portion of the church*, then the prosecution of the object *in that mode* will most assuredly result in mutual coldness, and recrimination, and finally in open and distressing divisions. I am indeed no prophet ; nor does it demand a prophet's ken to foretel this event, for who has not *seen* it in numberless instances ? I do therefore now most solemnly charge you, brethren ; and I do most solemnly charge *you, sisters* ; to guard against *this* root of bitterness, and beware of thus doing any thing to break, or mar even, this golden chain of peace and union. Be not hasty to embrace *new things*, or adopt *new modes* of doing good. Listen to the divine word, which says, " Stand ye in the *old ways*, and see and ask for the *old paths*, where is *the good way*, and walk ye therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls." Study, and labor, and pray much and long, and make sacrifices of feeling, yea, of every thing but *known* duty, to " keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace." Without this, religious institutions, if continued, will lose much of their energy and salutary influence ; and eventually it will be written upon your walls, in broad and blazing characters, "*Thy glory is departed.*"

Be faithful in the execution of discipline. Re-

ligion in its purity will not long flourish, nor exist even, where the laws of Christ for the regulation of his house are unexecuted. And forget not that every individual member of the church is solemnly bound by his covenant to aid in this duty, "according to his capacity, opportunity and station."

Maintain a faithful observance of the means of grace. On this depends, instrumentally, your own advancement in knowledge and holiness ; and it is demanded of you, for the good of others, and the glory of God. *Then duly observe the Sabbath, nor let trifles even keep you from a regular attendance upon the worship of God at his house.—Read daily the divine word ; neglect not the closet ; sustain the family altar ; and strive to keep a live religion in your own soul, and honor and advance it among those around you, by serious and devout conversation on all suitable occasions.*

Seek also for revivals of pure religion ; with these the prosperity of the church is intimately connected : but seek them only in strict accordance with the word of God.

Forget not him who *is*, or who *may be*, over you in the Lord ; but "esteem him very highly in love," if not for his *own* sake, yet "for his *work's* sake :" and let not his heart ever faint, nor his hands grow weak, for want of your sympathies, your prayers, your counsels, and your efforts.

Let the best interests of the rising generation lie near your heart. Youth and children are the hope of the church, and the hope of the world. Seek

their attendance at the house of God, and in the Sabbath School, with the assurance that—

“ Though seed lie buried long in dust,
“ It sha’n’t deceive your hope.”

Forget not the destitute and the heathen ; but strive, according to your means, to give the Gospel to every creature, that men may be saved, and God be glorified through the whole earth.

In short, *regulate your whole life by the unerring oracles of God*, hoping for final acceptance with him, only through the merits of his co-equal Son.

II. *To the Society.*

I am persuaded that not an individual of this society is unconvinced that the salutary influence of religious institutions is worth more, unspeakably more, for *this world alone*, than all it costs.— But when you think of pardon and eternal salvation proffered and secured by the Gospel, surely you must estimate it above all price. And if you are convinced, that both temporal and spiritual prosperity have been here secured by the doctrines ordinarily dispensed, then, although sometimes these doctrines may seem unnecessarily rigid, yet you will not, acting as wise men, venture to *exchange them*, for sentiments more lax, and more easy and pleasant to the sinful heart, and more consonant to the loose practices of men, under the apprehension that *such* would be more effectual to

restrain vice, promote virtue, and avail for the best interests of the people. Would you then secure all the blessings of these institutions to yourselves while you live, and to your children and future generations after you are dead, be determined *fully to sustain them*. For this end ever be *united* in all your designs and efforts. Always be supplied, if possible, with the regular worship of God, and ministration of his word : and let him who labors with you in word and doctrine ever have such a support that he may give *all* his time and talents to his official duties.

Nor be satisfied with the regular devotion of *your substance*, but give also your *influence* in other ways ; and especially by *your attendance on the ministrations of the word with your families*, from Sabbath to Sabbath, and by laboring to induce your neighbors and acquaintance to unite with you in that which is so reasonable and beneficial. Permit not yourselves to have “itching ears,” nor be “carried about by every wind of doctrine,” being “double minded” and “unstable ;” but be regular and steadfast in your attendance *at your own place of worship*. *This kind of support* a minister must have from his people, or his hands will be weak, his heart faint, and his influence small, however great their liberality in other respects ; and this is necessary to the greatest prosperity of the society.

Let the church also ever have your cheerful and generous co-operation in all that is calculated to advance the best interests of the society : in all

that may relate to the regular ministrations of the word ; to the *revival*, from time to time, and *continuance of the singing of the praises of God in the sanctuary* ; to the reparation and preservation of the house of worship ; to the maintenance of due order, and propriety of behavior by all in your religious assemblies ; to the support of Sabbath Schools from year to year ; and whatever else may be needful to give religious institutions the greatest effect upon the whole community around you, and to send them to the ends of the earth.

III. *To the aged.*

Almost all that were aged at the time of my settlement here are now dead ; and those, of that class, that still remain are now just on the brink of the grave. Those who were then in the prime of life, and are still living, are now among the aged. My friends, you have passed through the vigor and sprightliness of youth, and the busy, bustling scenes of middle life, and one year after another has brought you near the end of your days. Fathers and Mothers, I can address you but a few times more ; and for you, whom I respect and love, and reckon among my dearest friends on earth, who were active in fixing me here as your spiritual teacher, among whom I have happily lived and reared my family, from whom I have received a constant succession of kindnesses, and to whom I have dispensed divine truth for a quarter of a century ; for *you*, my aged friends, I feel a deep, a

very deep interest. A part of you, and, oh ! how painful the thought, *but a part* of you, I see among the professed people of God. Those who have, in truth, embraced the great salvation I congratulate. While you are grateful that you have lived under Gospel light, and been induced to improve it for the remission of your sins and the salvation of your souls ; now, as you decline in vigor of body and mind, and bend downwards to the tomb, O, live looser to the world and nearer to God ; increase in watchfulness and prayer ; and, in the exercise of a constantly increasing faith and hope, quietly wait for a glorious immortality.

But others of you, aged friends, I fear, are to the present hour destitute of a well-grounded confidence that you are prepared to die. Could I see you, during the little time that yet remains, coming to the Saviour, and preparing for his kingdom, O, how it would rejoice my heart ! yea more, there would be joy among the angels in heaven on your account. And shall it never be ? There is yet a *little* space, “ *but how little* none can know.” O, waste it not ; aged Fathers and Mothers, *waste it not*. Though God is merciful, still he *is* just : and these *sixty* or *seventy* years of rich Gospel mercies must be accounted for ; and shall it be with unutterable anguish in your soul ? *Must* the shadows of the everlasting evening gather round you, aged friends, while yet you have no hope in Christ ; and the night of death usher you into the interminable darkness of despair ? God forbid.

IV. *To youth and children.*

Among the people, and within this house, I behold a *new generation*. All here, who have not passed twenty five years of age, were unborn at the time of my settlement.* For the young of this people I have ever felt a deep interest, and for their good have devoted much time and labor.—The elder part of the community will gradually melt away, until they will all disappear; and those now young must fill all the places in the church and society now filled by others. And, my young friends, I would ask, is it not for the best good of that community you will soon help form, as well as for your own best good, to have, and maintain, a character based on an exemption from all immorality, and the love and practice of genuine virtue? Permit me, then, to exhort you to draw your rules of life from the infallible standard of divine inspiration. All that you need to avoid, and all you need to embrace, is here laid down in the plainest terms; and, if duly regarded, will ever guide you in the right path. But there is another life after this: you are destined to an immortal existence; and “he builds too low, who builds beneath the skies.” Realize then your accountability to God; the sinfulness of your heart and life; the need you have of a cordial trust in Jesus Christ, the only

* I have united in marriage, within this town, during the twenty five years past, *two hundred and twenty-five couple*; and many of the parents of the present generation of youth and children are of that number. Of late I have united in marriage some of the *second generation*.

Saviour ; and *now*, in the morning of your days, prepare for the future. My young friends, many of you, by and by, will gather round my lifeless remains, and follow them to the grave, where you also must eventually lie. Should you disregard all the instructions you *have* had, and *may yet have*, what occasion will there then be for you to exclaim, “ How have I hated instruction ; and my heart “ despised reproof ; and have not obeyed the voice “ of my teacher, nor inclined mine ear to him that “ instructed me ! ” But when you meet all the instructions of ministers, of parents, of sabbath school teachers ; and all the warnings of the word and providence of God, and meet them unimproved, O, who can *imagine* even the anguish with which you will then be overwhelmed ? Remember, “ God requireth that which is past ; ” past mercies, past warnings, past sins ; all, *all* will be remembered, and come into your final account : “ Behold “ *now* is the accepted time ; behold, *now* is the day “ of salvation : ” “ to-day, if ye will hear his voice, “ harden not your hearts.”

V. *To the whole Congregation.*

It is matter of deep solemnity to live where the Bible, the Sabbath, the preaching of the Gospel, and all the means of grace are within your reach : and when you stand at the judgment seat of Christ how different will be the review from that we have taken to-day ! Then, how tremendously solemn will it be to have, not twenty-five years only, but

a whole life, spent in a land of religious means and opportunities, to answer for. I do, therefore, call upon all to improve their privileges while they have them. *Those especially, here present to-day, who are not accustomed to attend on the worship of God in the sanctuary,* I do now most affectionately invite and entreat to consider. *You,* my friends, in common with others, enjoy an immense amount of good through the influence of religious institutions ; and yet, in neglecting to give countenance and support to these institutions, your conduct is calculated to rob yourselves, your families, and the community around you, of all this good. Should *all* the people do as you do, in this matter, in what a degraded and wretched condition would they soon be ! If you would but duly consider the injurious tendency of your practice, as it regards the best interests of yourselves and others, *in this world only*, it should seem that nothing could prevent you from breaking through this pernicious habit of neglecting the house and worship of God on the Sabbath : as *good citizens*, as *friends to virtue*, and the quiet and prosperity of community, you would unite with others in sustaining the institutions of the Gospel here.

And having now an opportunity, I *must* remind you that *you* have an immortal soul to be saved or lost as well as others :—and that the day is approaching when there will be no more Sabbaths to welcome or abuse ; no more sanctuaries to flee to or to shun ; no more sermons to improve or to

neglect ; when time itself shall be no longer, and you will enter on the awards of eternity. Duly consider *these* things, and surely you will be irresistibly impelled to give your countenance and support to religious institutions here, and on every returning Sabbath hasten to this house of God, to learn your duty and secure your salvation.

And now, having spoken so freely of others, I may be permitted, on an occasion so singular as this, and which I cannot expect to be repeated, to say a few things more particularly of myself, and then I shall have done.

After having supplied the desk here for about three months, I received, in July, 1813, a vote from this church, "no one opposing," and an "unanimous" vote from the *town* to settle here in the work of the Gospel ministry : and on the 13th of October following I was ordained. In this world of disease and death, and in this age, so remarkably distinguished for the frequent dismissions of ministers, it is not without mingled emotions of astonishment and gratitude that I continue still in life, and in the pastoral office here. At the beginning of my ministry "I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling : " and all along, during the twenty-five years past, amidst the labors, anxieties and responsibilities of my office, I have found occasion to exclaim, "Who is sufficient for these things ?" But in answer to the prayers of the pious living and dead, "hitherto the Lord hath helped me," and I "continue to this

day." To you the vigor of my youth, and the ripper experience and energy of my manhood, have been devoted. *Fifty-two* years from my birth have now elapsed, nearly one-half of which has been spent in labors for the best interests of yourselves, your kindred and your children. That my imperfections and deficiencies have been many I am perfectly aware ; still it has been my *endeavor* to be "an example to the flock," to practice that religion I have professed and preached, faithfully to dispense the unadulterated truths of God, and clean the skirts of my garments from the blood of all souls. In preparations for the desk on the Sabbath, and other official efforts from neighborhood to neighborhood, and from house to house, especially in *some* of the past years of my ministry, as you all know, I have not been sparing of time, labor or strength. In times of prosperity and joy I have rejoiced with you ; and with you, when Providence frowned, I have prayed and wept.—Especially around the beds of the sick and dying, and the graves of departed relatives and friends, have we together mingled our sighs, and prayers, and tears. With numbers of you have I had deeply solemn and affecting interviews when you were bowed down under a sense of sin, and enquiring, with heart-rending solicitude, "What must I do to be saved?" and the unspeakable satisfaction of directing you to that "Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world." Respecting many I can say, "We have taken sweet counsel together,

and walked unto the house of God in company ;” and had many delightful seasons of communion at the table of our common Lord, where his banner over us has been love, and we have obtained strength to go on our way rejoicing. But these labors and scenes must have an end. My eyes already grow dim, grey hairs are thickening upon me, and all the powers of nature decay ; and, if continued, my labors among you must necessarily be much circumscribed, and, at no distant day, must utterly cease. But, brethren and friends, whether my continuance be longer or shorter, unless I am a total stranger to the emotions of my own heart, I feel the deepest interest in your welfare. I am not only destitute of a single feeling of animosity towards an individual of this people, but am possessed of an affectionate good will to you *all*. I have never while among you, during the whole twenty-five years past, received from any individual what I supposed to be the least personal insult or abuse ; and if I have, at any time, or in any manner, injured any one, in relation to his property, his character, or his feelings, I sincerely regret it, and do now crave his forgiveness. My feelings compel me to add, that many, and great, and unceasing, have been the expressions of kindness I have received from numbers of this church and people since I have been with you. Not only has my stipulated salary been annually paid, and considerable sums contributed to give me a life-membership in the American Bible, Education, Tract, and

The following are some of the most important results of the
 researches of the present century in the history of the
 human mind. The first of these is the discovery of the
 laws of the mind, which have been found to be the same
 in all men, and in all ages. The second is the discovery of the
 laws of the body, which have been found to be the same
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 laws of the human universe, which have been found to be the same
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other kindred Societies ; but occasional donations from numbers, and *especially from the females at a yearly visitation*, have been made, much to my encouragement and comfort, and that of my family, commencing at the time of my settlement, and continuing for the whole of the twenty-five years past, down to the present time ; and I am constrained to say, the *last one* by no means the least.*

Receive my most cordial thanks for every expression of kindness towards me and mine, by which the asperities of life have been lessened and my pilgrimage greatly cheered. And may He, who gave you the means and the disposition, and whose hands are full of blessings, reward you a thousand fold, and confer his favors upon *you*. and *your children*, so far as it will be best, without measure and without end.

While you live, and I am a subject of prayer,

* At the time of my settlement, in 1813, I received from the church and people a donation of *four hundred dollars*, raised by subscription. A few months afterwards, when I commenced house-keeping, articles for convenience and support, to a very considerable amount in value, were generously brought in. At the time of building, in 1821, in provisions, money, lumber, nails, stone, labor, &c. &c. some hundreds of dollars were contributed. At an annual visitation of the Ladies, the heart of myself and family has been greatly cheered, and the means of living increased, by their liberality. In 1831 I received as a donation from *the Bible Class* articles for clothing, worth between *thirty and forty dollars*. From year to year a *portion of my fuel* has been a gift from the people ; and, besides many occasional acts of beneficence from *individuals*, expressive of *great kindness and generosity*, I received, during the *last month*, to repair the recent loss of a horse, about *seventy dollars*. Especially, since *the great rise of the articles of living*, which has borne so powerfully upon salary men, the people have manifested a spirit of kindness and generosity, which, *with economy*, has counteracted almost entirely the pressure of the times.

let me have an interest in your supplications.— When you come to the throne of grace, in the public and social meeting, or around the family altar, or bow before your God, where no eye but His beholds you, O, then, bear me on your heart, as a minister of the Gospel, as a professed christian, as a sinful, dying, accountable creature, that God would remember me in mercy relative to all my necessities in this world, and those of the world to come.

And now, grateful to God that I have had a disposition and ability to prepare this review, and opportunity and strength to present it to so many in this house to-day, my sincere desire is that the result of it may be the good of this church and society in general, and the special good of every individual : and my most ardent prayer is, that the peace and harmony which have subsisted between us, in so great a measure, and for so many years, may be continued and strengthened even while life lasts : and especially that *that religion*, which *some* of us profess, may be accepted, and loved, and practised, by *all* ; and *all* at last together possess its awards, through grace, in the world of purity, and glory above.

" Beyond the narrow vale of time,
 " Where bright, celestial ages roll ;
 " To scenes eternal, scenes sublime,
 " *She* points the way, and leads the soul.

" Baptised with her renewing fire,
 " May *we* the crown of glory gain ;
 " Rise, when the hosts of heaven expire,
 " And reign with God, forever reign."



